

## Utah's Past Approaches to Veteran Memorials

Utah veteran's memorials for national conflicts (including the US Civil War, Spanish-American War, etc.) began in earnest in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially after World War I (1914-1919). It was at the end of this national conflict that nearly every city or town in Utah assessed the loss of men or sometimes women, who served in the U.S. Military.

From 1920 until the present, Utah has built scores of local markers and monuments (exterior and interior), community facilities, cemeteries, parks, memorial trees and even highways, recognized as memorials to war dead or for those who served in time of war.

Following the conventions established by local history groups, such as the Daughters of Utah Pioneers and the Sons of Utah Pioneers (and their markers), and local chapter-based service organizations, such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions Clubs, Utah veteran memorials were built by local chapters of such groups as the American Legion (est. 1919), the Veterans of Foreign Wars (est. 1899), other veteran organizations, and most particularly by dozens of local memorial committees.

Traditionally, Utah's towns, cities, or counties have honored their own lost servicemen or women. Monuments are located predominantly in center intersections, town halls, municipal parks and cemeteries. Although Utah has held many statewide veterans events, most especially on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, Utahns and Utah's veterans have traditionally focused their remembrances around their own community's fallen soldiers.

The one most recent exception is Layton City's 4/5 scale, half-million dollar re-creation of the National Vietnam Monument in Washington, D.C., which includes a complete listing of over fifty-eight thousand Americans killed in the Vietnam War (1955-1975). The re-creation is located in the Layton Commons Park and was spearheaded by the Northern Utah Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

### **State Survey of World War II Memorials or Means to Remember WWII Veterans:**

The Utah Division of State History (USH) and the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs (UDVMA) jointly created and managed a [Utah Veteran's Memorials GIS Database](#), which shows the locations, descriptions and photographs of all veteran's memorials and markers throughout Utah. The database currently lists [forty-seven local monuments, markers or sites related to WWII](#).

**The Meditation Chapel (1948) in Memory Grove Park**, east and adjacent to the Utah State Capitol, was built as a memorial to Utah's sons who died during World War II. Resembling a small Greek temple, constructed of marble with sculpted bronze doors, the chapel contains the names of Utah servicemen whose bodies were never recovered. The chapel includes World War II themed stained glass windows ([See SLC Historic Landmark Commission Staff Report](#)). Memory Grove Park in general is also designated a state memorial, for all Utahns who lost their lives in military service.

The 30-acre [Utah Veterans Cemetery & Memorial Park](#), located on State Route 68 (Bluffdale, Utah) within Camp Williams, Utah's official veterans' cemetery, also serves as a general memorial for Utahns veterans. The Utah Dept. of Veterans and Military Affairs manages the park. This may be the appropriate location for a new WWII monument commemorating Utah's contributions and sacrifices during World War II.

[Fort Douglas](#) (32 Potter St. SLC, UT., established in 1862 to protect the overland mail, telegraph lines and emigrant trains) includes a Utah Military Museum, which was established in 1974-1976 as part of Utah's United States Bicentennial celebrations. The museum includes various military monuments and strives to tell Utah's military history story. The Fort Douglas Cemetery includes the resting places for German and Italian WWII prisoners of war who died while incarcerated in Utah.

The [Topaz Museum](#) (Delta, UT) tells the story of eight thousand Japanese-Americans who were held from 1942 to 1945 in Utah's Topaz Relocation Center. [The Historic Wendover Airfield and Museum](#) (352 E. 'A' Street, Wendover, UT) is considered the best preserved World War II Army Air Forces training base in the United States. The US Army planes that carried the nuclear bombs which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki were tested, loaded and flown from the Wendover Airfield.

Three other WWII-related historic sites and museums are the [Salina, Utah German POW Camp](#); the federally funded [Hill Aerospace Museum](#) (7961 Wardleigh Road, Hill Air Force Base, UT) describes the WWII story via air battles and aeronautics; and the [Navajo Code Talkers Museum](#) (Tuba City, Arizona) tells the story of Navajo soldiers, many from Utah, who used their Na-Dené language to transmit US Military information regarding tactics, troop movements, etc. during WWII battles.

**The Utah State Archives** holds record series 19959, which is titled [The State Historical Society World War Military Listings](#), includes various official federal and state documents listing all those who died during WWII from Utah. It also includes documents related to the creation of the WWII State Meditation Chapel (1948) in Memory Grove Park.

In 2017 and 2018, Utah Division of State History and the Utah Department of Veterans and Military Affairs managed a [World War I Commission](#) that included a grant program that offered funding for statewide and local WWI related educational and memorial events. Funds were also used to stabilize and repair existing WWI monuments and markers, and to create new local monuments. For example see [USU Unveils Memorial Honoring WWI Veterans](#). Finally, the commission under the direction of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* created a historical booklet on [Utah's World War I Monuments](#)